

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-8 (canceled)

Claim 9 (original) A sheet separate-feeding apparatus comprising:

 a sheet stacking portion;

 a sheet feeding surface extending from the sheet stacking portion in a sheet feeding direction;

 a separation roller which is attached to a rotary shaft arranged orthogonally to said sheet feeding direction thereby to rotate with rotation of said rotary shaft, and feeds out the sheet placed on said sheet stacking portion onto the sheet feeding surface;

 a separation pad which is arranged on said sheet feeding surface and brought into pressure-contact with said separation roller with the sheet nipped between said separation roller and it;

 stopper levers which are arranged on both sides of a contact portion on said sheet feeding surface between said separation roller and said separation pad so that they can come in and out;

 a nearly L-shaped lever member, of which one end includes said stopper lever and of which the other end includes a pushing side end portion, and which is rotatably supported at its bending portion;

 a movable sheet stacking portion which extends from said sheet stacking portion in the sheet feeding direction, is supported on said sheet stacking portion side, and is arranged so that it can tilt;

 a lever pushing portion which is provided for said movable sheet stacking portion, and pushes said pushing side end portion by tilting of said movable sheet stacking portion in the direction where said stopper lever is protruded;

 stopping members arranged on both sides of said movable sheet stacking portion; and

 cover stopping portions which are formed on both sides of said cover protrusively toward said stopping members, and press said stopping members in cooperation with opening and closing of said cover thereby to tilt said movable sheet stacking portion.

Claim 10 (new): A sheet-separate feeding apparatus comprising:

- a sheet-stacking portion for stacking a plurality of sheets, said sheet stacking portion disposed inclined so as to receive the sheets thereon;

- a sheet-forwarding plate on which the sheets are forwarded;

- a separate roller for separating and forwarding the sheets placed on said sheet-stacking portion by rotating on its own horizontal axis normal to direction of forwarding the sheets on said sheet-forwarding plate;

- a separation pad for nipping the sheets in cooperation with said separation roller;

- a stopper mechanism disposed adjacent to said separate roller and said separation pad under said sheet-forwarding plate, said mechanism including a lever movable to protrude above a surface of said sheet forwarding plate so as to stop the sheets on an upper point of stream of forwarding the sheets on said sheet-forwarding plate than a point where said separate roller and said separation pad contact each other with the sheets nipped by said separate roller and said separation pad when the sheets are placed on said sheet-nipping portion so that the said separate roller rotates to separate and forward one of the sheets nipped by said separation pad.

Claim 11 (new): The sheet-separate feeding apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the stopper mechanism moves said lever under the surface of said sheet-forwarding plate while said separate roller rotates to forward the sheets.

Claim 12 (new): The sheet-separate feeding apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said lever has an end bended so as to receive the sheets when said lever protrudes above said surface of said sheet-forwarding plate.

Claim 13 (new): A sheet-separate feeding apparatus comprising:

- a sheet-stacking portion for stacking a plurality of sheets, said sheet stacking portion disposed inclined so as to receive the sheets thereon;

- a cover portion for covering the sheets while the sheets are stacked on said sheet

stacking portion, said cover portion rotating on its own horizontal axis normal to a direction of forwarding the sheets;

a sheet-forwarding plate on which the sheets are forwarded;

a separate roller for separating and forwarding one of the sheets placed on said sheet-stacking portion by rotating on its own horizontal axis normal to a direction of forwarding the sheets on said sheet-forwarding plate;

a separation pad for nipping the sheets in cooperation with said separation roller, and

a stopper mechanism disposed adjacent to said separate roller and said separation pad, said mechanism including a lever movable for receiving the sheets with the sheets nipped by said separate roller and said separation pad when the sheets are placed on said sheet-stacking portion and said mechanism automatically protruding said lever above a surface of said sheet forwarding plate on an upper point of a stream of forwarding the sheets on said sheet-forwarding plate than a point where said separate roller and said separation pad contact each other when said covering portion rotates.

Claim 14 (new): The sheet-separate feeding apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said stopper mechanism moves said lever under the surface of said sheet-forwarding plate while said separate roller rotates to forward the sheets.

Claim 15 (new): The sheet-separate feeding apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said lever has an end bended so as to receive the sheets when said lever protrudes above said surface of said sheet-forwarding plate.